

## MSD to pay to fix sewer backups

By Cindi Andrews  
The Cincinnati Enquirer

Hamilton County commissioners agreed Wednesday to use sewer fees to fix persistent flooding in basements — a move that could spell relief for hundreds of homeowners at the expense of higher sewer rates for users countywide.

The 2-1 vote directed the Metropolitan Sewer District to pay 100 percent of the cost to stop the county's oldest sewers, which carry both storm water and sewage, from backing up into low-lying basements. MSD has been paying only 50 percent for such repairs.

The problem often occurs during heavy rains in Cheviot, North College Hill, many Cincinnati neighborhoods and other older areas. But the fix can run into hundreds of thousands of dollars, more than small communities say they can afford.

"We're falling behind on our street repairs because we're utilizing street levy funds to fix those chronic basement problems," said Jerry Thamann, North College Hill's safety-service director.

The cost to MSD will be significant, too. The sewer district estimated that 1,000 homes may need to be repaired or torn down to solve the problem, at a cost of \$251 million. The Sierra Club puts the number of homes at 10,000.

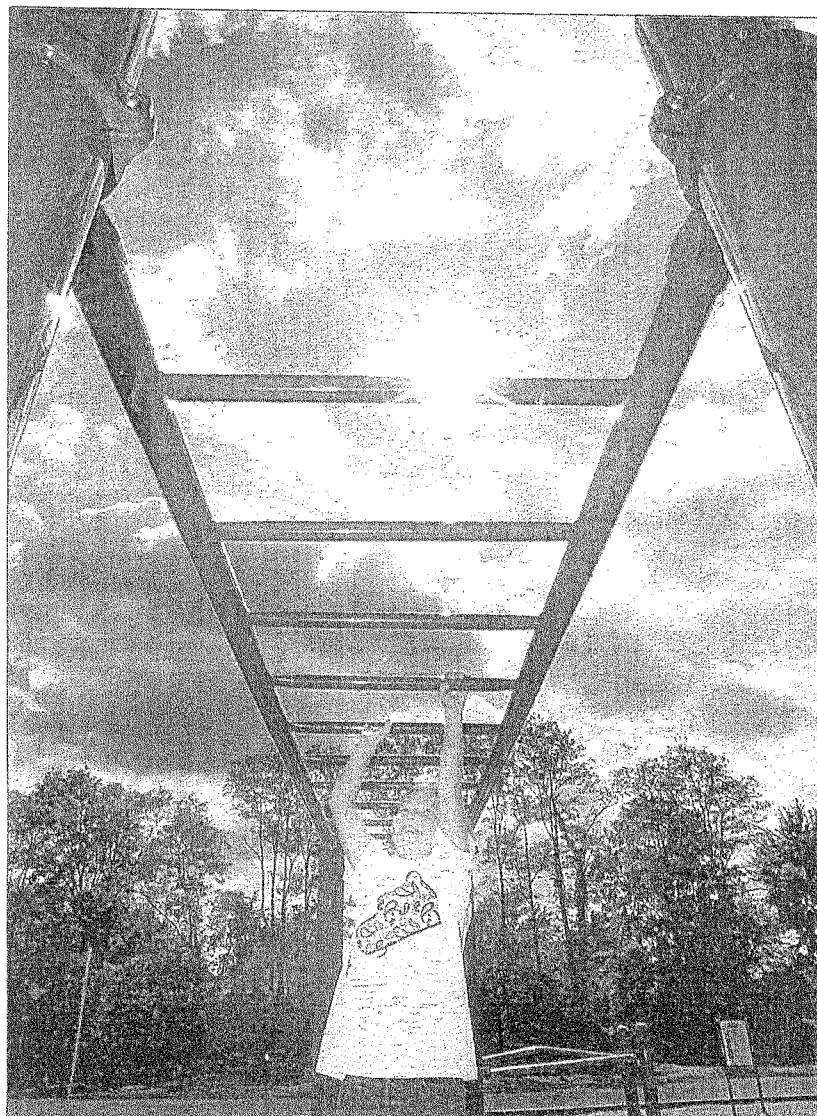
MSD has proposed a new solution that would cost an estimated \$37 million for 1,000 homes. All connections between the flood-prone home and the sewer system would be severed except for a small pump that would move the home's waste into the sewer system.

"If we do that, everyone who's got sewage in their basement should have it cleared up in five years," Commissioner Phil Heimlich said. "That's a lot better than telling people it could take 30 years to get fixed."

But even new options would require a sewer rate increase of 4 percent for property owners, on top of a 5 percent increase already planned for 2004, MSD said. That would increase the average bill from \$320 a year to \$350.

That was cause for concern Wednesday for some township officials. It's not fair to expect their residents to pay more to fix other people's sewers, Anderson Township Trustee Russ Jackson told commissioners. Green Township Administrator Kevin Celarek said he's also concerned his township's need

## HANG IN THERE



The Cincinnati Enquirer: GLENN HARTONG

Emily Chaney, 9, helps to test out the new outdoor fitness stations Wednesday at Hilltop Elementary in Reading. Standard Textile, which has headquarters in Reading, donated \$14,000, which the school used, along with help from the nonprofit Project Fit America, to set up the stations. Hilltop Principal Tim Ackermann said the grant will help the school "take our traditional physical education class to a new level with fun, outdoor activities that will instill in our children the basic building blocks of a healthy lifestyle."

## Museum Center shows Lewis and Clark letters

By Breuna R. Kelly  
The Cincinnati Enquirer

After sitting undiscovered in a box for 118 years, three letters from explorers Meriwether Lewis and William Clark are now on display.

The letters, two by Lewis and one by Clark, went unnoticed in the Cincinnati Museum Center's collection until this summer, when a research librarian looking for something else stumbled upon a register notation: letter fragment, Missouri River 1804.

tant find. It gives us more pieces of the puzzle," said Jim Holmberg, a Lewis and Clark historian and curator of special collections at the Filson Historical Society in Louisville, who authenticated the letters.

The letters were donated to the museum in 1885 by Aaron Torrence, son of an executor of the estate of Findley, a military friend of Lewis and Clark.

They went unnoticed in the museum's collection, said Ruby Rogers, director of the Cincinnati Historical Library and Community History, until

detail of the exploration not recorded in Lewis' journals, Holmberg said.

"My object is, if possible, to discover a practicable water communication across the continent of North America to the Pacific Ocean, which I hope to effect by means of this river, and the Columbia or Oregon River, which discharges itself into the Pacific Ocean," Lewis wrote.

In September 1807, nearly a year after his return, Clark went to Big Bone Lick in Northern Kentucky to "collect some particular bone of the mammoth

## Crisis suit

### Police in ID,

By Jennifer Edwards  
The Cincinnati Enquirer

**LIBERTY TWP** thieves pilfering mailboxes and snatching purses homes are prompting police to step and shaking neighborly security.

In Butler County Township, sheriff are warning residents mail checks for homes. There have 20 reports of thefting checks from since spring and in the last 10 days, to Monte Mayer spokesman.

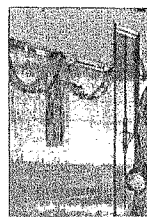
Police in neighborhood Township are asking whether the spreading to their where fraudulent c

## Charity help

By Cindy Kranz  
The Cincinnati Enquirer

**ST. BERNARD** years ago, Chad Wigan helping a dismate to and from Roger Bacon High What started as a job has evolved into ship that continues the last bell rings.

Now, it's second the 16-year-old junior his friend, Adam Ho who uses a wheelch





home's waste into the sewer system.

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But even new options would require a sewer rate increase of 4 percent for property owners, on top of a 5 percent increase already planned for 2004, MSD said. That would increase the average bill from \$320 a year to \$350.

That was "cause for concern" Wednesday for some township officials. It's not fair to expect their residents to pay more to fix other people's sewers, Anderson Township Trustee Russ Jackson told commissioners. Green Township Administrator Kevin Ceberek said he's also concerned his townships need for new sewers will be ignored and the push to fix sewage-in-passthrough problems.

"If everyone takes that position, we're not going to have a sewer district," Commissioner Todd Portune said.

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fun, outdoor activities that will instill in

# Museum

## Lewis an

By Breana R. Kelly

The Cincinnati Enquirer

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She found the letter and read: "I now feel myself fairly launched on my voyage of discovery, having ascended this river nearly eleven hundred miles."

Lewis wrote the letter in September 1804, about a year into the great exploration of the west, to his friend James Findley in Cincinnati.

This is really an exciting and impor-

## A new history of v

Because I am Cincinnati-centric - or Nati-onal - or whatever it's called when you know in your heart that your hometown is the center of the universe - I did not start by asking the distinguished writer about her career. Or her book. Or the scandal at her newspaper.

Instead, I asked Gail Gleason, the first female editorial page editor for the *New York Times* and author of an unex-

school where "we were in charge of everything."

Gail Gleason was in charge of the newspaper. It's also made her take speech classes, for which Gail wrote "little monologues." These were published. "A little book," she says, when she is outed as a 15-year-old author by her sister-in-law Laura Gleason. The interior of the restaurant is dim, but I'm sure she is bushing. Modest. Very Cincinnati.

Auntie I don't expect it



Laura Gleason

ernment from of Massachusetts financial repo-